



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ETHIOPIA

CASE STUDY

Battling the Stigma of HIV/AIDS

Providing hope and support for HIV-affected women



With funding for a small business, Tadeleu keeps busy with orders on her manually-powered sewing machine.

“This program has given me life,” said Tadeleu, an HIV-positive mother who now runs her own small business.

Telling Our Story
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Challenge

Several years ago, a young mother in Ethiopia named Tadeleu contracted HIV from her husband, who later passed away from the disease. Her two children, who are HIV negative, live with their grandmother. She tells of the stigma she faces, both emotionally and socially. “When I found out I had the disease,” she said, “all I could think about was how much I hated myself, and I kept denying that I had the disease. I do not want to become intimate with people, because I fear they will find out my status.”

Initiative

When Tadeleu discovered she had HIV, she started attending support meetings at the Hope Center, a church-based organization established with help from USAID funding.

She found a sense of community and a program that would change her life. The Center provided skills, training, and start-up capital for her to begin a small sewing business. Now, she is too busy to worry about disapproval from her neighbors. Even so, her buyers are often from markets several towns away, because she does not want to deal with local people. Despite the stigma of living with HIV in Ethiopia, she finds relief in the Hope Center. “I am happy that the church has provided support,” she says. “They keep our secrets.”

Results

Vibrant fabrics grace the wall behind Tadeleu where she spends each day hard at work from sunrise to sunset at her manually-powered sewing machine. Orders come in regularly, giving Tadeleu confidence in her work and a sense of security. Amidst her tears, a smile breaks out, and she says, “This program has given me life.”

Photo: ICC/Stefanos Rouliakis